

Spring 2001



A PUBLICATION OF THE SC STATE BUDGET & CONTROL BOARD  
OFFICE OF GENERAL SERVICES, STATE FLEET MANAGEMENT

# Focus on Fleet

## From the State Fleet Manager

In South Carolina, there seem to be only two seasons: hot and less hot. Right now we are making the transition to "hot."

This season calls a number of things to mind: first, when the pollen stops falling, you need to get your cars washed; and second, when it starts to get warm, people get impatient. There are a couple of stories in this issue that will touch on those items.

First, if you need a car wash, just be sure you keep it reasonable. The guideline is this: no more than ten dollars a month for an automobile or twenty-five a month for a van (since those cost more to wash in

the first place) unless you get prior approval.

Second, when you get impatient, it's easy to forget about the decal and State tag hanging on the back of your State car.

We've all been in situations where we were in a hurry, hot, tired, frustrated, or just plain impatient. The temptation to abandon your defensive driving training and go on offense can be a mighty strong one in these situations.

Just remember: when you're out there in a State vehicle, you are instantly recognizable. Every driver who can read knows you're a State employee, and they're frequently ready to

assume the worst.

Part of our responsibilities here at State Fleet includes handling vehicle abuse complaints from private citizens. Sure, some of them turn out to be frivolous or vindictive, but an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Remember, Courtesy is contagious. Whatever happens,

*...Y'all be safe out there!*

—Gerald W. Calk  
State Fleet Manager

## What'll I Do?

Recently some users of the Wright Express Card have experienced problems with authorizations: some stations are now asking for a Vehicle ID Number in addition to the Odometer Reading and the Driver ID. This request is a security measure on the part of some individual stations, so you should encounter it only sporadically.

If a station asks for the Vehicle ID Number, here's what you should do:

Look at the center of the card you are using under the heading "Vehicle Card

Number" and locate the five-digit number there.

Enter the number exactly as it is shown on the card **except** the hyphens or dashes: for example, if the Vehicle Card Number is 0123-1, you should enter 01231.

These simple steps should solve any authorization problems you might encounter. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Rob Malpass at (803) 737-1611 or by email at [rmalpass@ogs.state.sc.us](mailto:rmalpass@ogs.state.sc.us) for more information.

—Rob Malpass

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# Fleet Manager Profiles

## Introducing Jim Castle, Clemson University

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Nestled in the shadow of Memorial Stadium, also known as Death Valley, is the transportation headquarters of Clemson University. There in the austere building toil a band of dedicated fleet professionals who keep the University on wheels, so to speak, throughout the State.

The leader of this group, which maintains a fleet of over 1,100 vehicles, is Clemson University Fleet manager Jim Castle. We recently took the opportunity to speak with Mr. Castle about various aspects of fleet management.

Mr. Castle has served as Clemson's Fleet Manager for two years, bringing with him an impressive background in both training and experience. He graduated from the University of Missouri with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration. He majored in Business Logistics with emphasis on transportation. He later earned a Master's Degree in Procurement from Webster University in his hometown of St. Louis, Missouri.

Perhaps more important than the formal education, Mr. Castle also served in the United States Air Force as an officer in the Transportation career field.

Mr. Castle has also pursued continuing education in fleet management, from the annual SC Governmental Fleet Managers' Association (SCGFMA) convention to other seminars. He says that "any topic can be interesting." He also recommends the SCGFMA convention highly, especially to anyone who is new to the business of fleet management.

Clemson currently uses a system called FASTER from CCG to manage its vehicle fleet. While FASTER has been around for some time, and was once considered the industry standard, it will soon be phased out in favor of a newer, more expensive product. The company that supports the software will also begin to charge a substantial annual fee for that support — a development that will force many smaller customers to choose a less expensive package. Jim is currently exploring other options for fleet management software.

Recently our state has received some unfavorable media attention because of high traffic fatalities. Fortunately, safety is uppermost in the minds of most of our fleet managers, and traffic accidents and injuries have decreased over the past year. Clemson has a vigorous safety awareness program that is handled by the University's Risk Management section. The program includes Driver Education courses for the vehicle management section and even for other State agencies.

Of course every State agency is keenly aware of the constraints of the new budget. Mr. Castle says he controls costs at Clemson by purchasing the most efficient vehicle for the requirements. He also advises drivers concerning the high cost of fuel. "Using the existing State contract expedites the process of ordering vehicles, and we purchase most of our vehicles this way." Clemson pro-

vides the most cost-efficient maintenance possible by using a combination of in-house maintenance, outside labor (through SFM's Commercial Vendor Repair Program) and lowest-bid solicitation for body work.

Mr. Castle says the use of technology has facilitated his task as Fleet Manager. "Technology is a broad term, but it has provided many different benefits to assist with the management of the fleet. From diagnostic capability and data collection to improving communication, and to the vehicles themselves, technology has provided me a great deal of assistance."

Among the problems facing fleet management in the next few years, Mr. Castle identifies two main issues to solve: first, the continued growth of the vehicle displacement program, and the difficulty of hiring and retaining qualified technicians. He says that in regard to reducing dependence on petroleum-based products the State should make greater use of hybrid vehicles, reduce the size of the fleet, and reduce the size of the vehicles themselves. "I still feel the federal government should recognize hybrid vehicles [for AFV credits], at least as a transitional step." Clemson already makes use of the available AFV: "Most of our sedan fleet will be made up of Ford Taurus Flex-Fuel Vehicles, and we'll introduce biodiesel into our pumps sometime this summer."

Mr. Castle sums up his fleet management experience at Clemson this way: "There's no substitute for the people I work with. They make the job enjoyable."

—Jonathan Eason, Editor

**Note:** Assistant Editor Margie Valladares created the questions for this series of profiles.

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# NHTSA Releases Van Safety Warning

## Vans can roll over when loaded

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is issuing a cautionary warning to users of 15-passenger vans because of an increased rollover risk under certain conditions.

The results of a recent analysis by NHTSA revealed that 15-passenger vans have a rollover risk similar to other vehicles when carrying a few passengers. However, the risk increases dramatically as the number of occupants from fewer than five to more than ten passengers.

In fact, 15-passenger vans with 10 or more occupants had a rollover rate in single-vehicle crashes nearly three times the rate of those that were lightly loaded.

NHTSA's analysis revealed that loading the 15-passenger van causes the center of gravity to shift rearward and upward, increasing the likelihood of roll-

over. The shift in the center of gravity will also increase the potential for loss of control in panic maneuvers.

Because of these risks, it is important that these vans be operated by experienced drivers. A person transporting 16 or more people for commercial purposes is required to have a Commercial Driver's License (CDL), which requires certain specialized knowledge and driving skills. Although the drivers of 15-passenger vans are not required to possess a CDL, they should still understand and be familiar with the handling characteristics of their vans, especially when the van is fully loaded.

NHTSA's analysis reinforces the value of seat belts. Nationwide, eighty percent of those who died last year in single-vehicle rollovers were not buckled up. Wearing seat belts dramatically increases the chances of survival during a rollover crash. NHTSA urges institutions using 15-passenger vans to require seat belt use at all times.

NHTSA is making this information available because of these findings and because of several highly publicized rollover accidents involving 15-passenger vans loaded with college students (often driven by a fellow student rather than a professional driver).

While federal law prohibits the sale of 15-passenger vans for the school-related transport of high-school age and younger students, no such prohibition exists for vehicles to transport college students or other passengers.

A copy of the NHTSA analysis of the rollover characteristics of 15-passenger vans can be found at:

<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/ncsa/reports.html#2001> .

*Contact Ron Tvorik, State Fleet Safety Officer, at (803) 737-1602 with any questions about how this directive affects the South Carolina State Fleet..*

## Mommy, That's a Naughty Word

If you've been to the gas pump lately, you may have heard this headline yourself. You can't help noticing that it takes more and more money to fill up. As of April 2001, the national average for regular unleaded gasoline had jumped to \$1.626 per gallon. This represents an enormous increase from the \$1.17 it was costing in April 1999.

Two major factors influence the retail price of fuel: the price of crude oil and the supply or inventory levels of the various types of fuel. While the price of crude has been somewhat stable over the last two years, the level of supply has been anything but. The main reason for the increase over the last two years has been the reduction in inventories.

Several factors have an effect on inventory levels:

- An unexpectedly cold winter of 2001 forced refiners to continue making heating fuels at a time when they needed to change over to refining gasoline to build stock.
- Fuels must be formulated differently to meet federal and state specifications according to season and location.
- Refiners must reduce their inventories to near zero in early May to prepare for the changeover to summer fuel grades.
- Demand for gasoline is up 1.6% over last year.
- The United States is currently importing 7% less gasoline than a year ago.

All these factors have played a part in raising the price we pay for gasoline at the pump.

## Van Safety Course Under Development

State Fleet Management (SFM) has started the development of a new Drivers Safety Course specifically designed for Van drivers. An analysis of SFM collision data revealed that the number of reported collisions involving vans was substantially higher than that of sedans, relative to the composition of the fleet.

Approximately 26% of the SFM fleet is comprised of 15 passenger vans, while they were involved in 45% of the reported collisions. A focus group comprised of representatives from various agencies that routinely use vans is offering their input on the course content and structure. Plans are for the course to offer some class room lecture combined with behind-the-wheel instruction.

Course participants will be required to successfully complete a series of maneuvers with a regular 15 passenger van or an ADA equipped mini-bus. The cost for this course has not yet been determined, but efforts are being made to keep it at a minimum.

When the course details are finalized, a letter announcing the course will be sent to all agencies that own or lease vans and mini-buses. SFM offers special thanks and recognition to the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy for the use of their training facilities.

For more information about this course, please contact Ron Tvorik, Fleet Safety Officer, at (803) 737-1602.

—Jeff McCormack

# SFM Maintenance Team Honored

## Earns Team of the Quarter Award from Office of General Services

State Fleet Management is pleased to announce that the SFM Maintenance Team has won the OGS Team of the Quarter Award for the third quarter of FY 2000, the quarter that ended on 31 March. The Maintenance Team received this award based on a number of factors. Members of the Maintenance Team achieved the following things to earn this distinction:

- Designed the individual screens and processes for a new SCEMIS module that will allow the tracking of manufacturer recall campaigns. Recall management will save the state thousands of dollars per year because many recalls are currently not being applied, and the state winds up replacing the defective part later and paying the cost.
- Revised the Preventive Maintenance (PM) schedules for the state fleet of over 17,000 vehicles, (excluding school buses). When properly implemented, these changes will save the state over \$100,000 per year. The changes were submitted to Financial Data Systems programmers along with the PM schedules for the Other Equipment Module currently under development for SCEMIS.
- The number of purchase orders issued for repair and service to state vehicles increased by 11%, and over \$1,182,790.00 was billed for vehicle repairs through the CVRP this quarter.
- The CVRP body shop workload increased 29.1% and over \$264,000.00 was billed to agencies for these repairs during this quarter.
- A total of 820 shop work orders were completed by the four technicians in the CTMF (an increase of 6%) and over \$112,280.00 was billed for vehicle repairs this quarter.
- A total of 7,649 documents were scanned into Image Edition this quarter, an increase of 8%, while 67 manufacturer recalls pertaining to the state fleet were imaged. The scanning of recalls is a new process as of last quarter.

- A total of 24 State Maintenance Facility Certification Reviews (a 4% increase) were conducted during this quarter.
- One new agency placed their 258 vehicles under the CVRP Program this quarter, bringing the total number of supported agencies to 28. A total of 11 agencies have joined the CVRP (39.3% increase) in the last 18 months. Current potential support for the 28 agencies is 9,044 vehicles.
- Revised the CVRP process for issuing Purchase Orders (POs) so that vendors are now required to write the approved amount on the ticket to eliminate misunderstandings.
- Devised and implemented a new process for scanning manufacturer service bulletins and recalls into the Image Web program site so all state agencies can have instant access to this information.
- The Commercial Vendor Repair Program (CVRP) personnel established a new bid for automotive glass replacement.
- Assisted State Purchasing in establishing the documents each agency uses to determine the vendors in each county that are authorized to sell automotive parts to government agencies and their discounts. SFM made these documents available to the shop supervisors approximately one month prior to their appearance on the State Purchasing web site.

Congratulations to Bill Page, Team Leader, and to all the members of the Maintenance Team for this richly deserved recognition.

If you would like more information about the Commercial Vendor Repair Program, contact Bob Amburgey at (803) 737-6398. For more about the Maintenance Facility Certification Program, contact Eleese Portee at (803) 737-1605; and for more information about the Central Transportation Maintenance Facility, contact Robert Seawright at (803) 737-1511.

## SFM Welcomes New Program Support Team Leader

Effective 15 March, the State Fleet Management Program Support Team has a new leader: **Cheryl Swan**. Ms. Swan has been Work Coordinator for the team for some time, while **Laura Baker** has served as Team Leader. Laura will be taking on new duties as part of her work with OGS Business Services.

While we will certainly miss seeing Laura at State Fleet as often as we are accustomed, we congratulate Cheryl on her promotion and wish the Program Support Team continued success under her leadership.

### *(Fuel Prices, cont. from page 3)*

Although there will be occasional disruptions because of refinery or transport problems, it is essential to maintain a flexible distribution system to get the supplies to market. Flexibility was much simpler in the past: if supplies were short in one area, they could be diverted from an area where they were plentiful. Now, however, government regulations have placed an enormous strain on the distribution system.

Amendments to the Clean Air Act of 1990 mandated that reformulated gasoline (RFG) meet new emissions standards beginning in 2000. Legislation also required state implementation plans that allowed individual cities to create their own regulations for cleaner burning fuels.

As a result, there are no fewer than 15 varieties of gasoline in use today. These RFG blends must be supplied to about a third of the U. S. gasoline market. One type of gasoline, such as the blend used in Atlanta and Birmingham, is different from all others and cannot be substituted for another blend in other markets. With this Balkanization becoming more prevalent, and with a pipeline system that was designed many years ago to handle only a few products, it is challenging and costly for refiners to move the right blend of gasoline to the right market.

Because of the reduced flexibility in the distribution system, once-insignificant disruptions can now wreak havoc on the supply flow.

## Why Can't You Behave?

Picture this:

It's four-thirty in the afternoon and you're driving east on I-126, trying to get back to the office before the end of the day. Traffic is in its usual cutthroat state: people weaving in and out of lanes, failing to signal (except with rude gestures), going twenty or thirty miles over the speed limit. You're minding your own business, keeping up with the flow of traffic, when somebody cuts you off.

In a moment of weakness, you come flying around them in the next lane, adding your own rude hand gesture to the list of recognized traffic signals, and you leave the offender in your dust. Feeling vindicated, as though you had had the last laugh, you zip on back to the office to check in before you head home.

There's just one catch: the guy in the other car got the license number of the State car you were driving. He calls State Fleet Management, or finds us on the Web, and puts in a complaint. The next thing you know, you're getting called on the carpet to explain your rude and childish behavior. If you don't talk your way out of it, you could face serious sanctions as a result of your conduct.

It's easy to forget when you're driving a state vehicle that you can be instantly identified. Everyone who can read recognizes you instantly on the road. You may not be famous to them, but they can spot a State car a mile away. And the State driver is the only impression many people ever get of a State employee, so it's important to make a good impression.

In Fiscal 2000, State Fleet fielded nearly fifty complaints about vehicle abuse from private citizens. Nearly half of those complaints involved speeding. So when you're driving your State car out in the wild, be sure you comport yourself well. Be polite and considerate, observe the posted speed limits, and you will present a positive image of the State Employee to the public at large. Lord knows, we need as much of that as we can get.



## Accident Procedures

In response to popular demand, we have decided to reprint the proper procedures to follow if you are involved in an accident while driving a **vehicle leased from State Fleet Management**:

- Turn ignition off and evacuate vehicle.
- Render first aid to any injured persons.
- Call for medical assistance or ambulance if required. (See inside front cover of **Vehicle Operator's Handbook** for numbers).
- Call local, municipal or county police, or SC Highway Patrol to report accident. (See inside front cover of **Vehicle Operator's Handbook** for numbers).
- Obtain data concerning the other vehicle and driver and complete the **Accident Report** from Appendix D of the **Vehicle Operator's Handbook**.
- Turn Accident Report in to your supervisor as soon as possible.
- Give the other driver your name and your agency's name and address.  
**DO NOT ADMIT RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY ACCIDENT.**
- Within 24 hours, report accident to Jimmy Lever at State Fleet Management, 803-737-1505, and the nearest office of James C. Greene Company. (See page i. in Vehicle Operator's Handbook for numbers). **Collect calls will be accepted.**
- Send a copy of the Accident Report (Appendix D) to each of the following addresses:

James C. Greene Insurance Adjusters  
PO Box 616  
Columbia, SC 29202  
**Call Collect (803) 771-8820**

Office of General Services  
State Fleet Management  
1022 Senate Street  
Columbia, SC 29201-3160  
**Call Collect (803) 737-0668**

For additional information, contact **Jimmy Lever**, State Fleet Accident Coordinator, at (803) 737-1505.



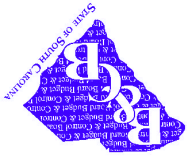
## This Says It All

Okay, I know this is almost certainly a fake, but it sums up neatly all our experience over the last few months of gas price increases.

Who knows? We may be seeing higher prices soon. This already feels like the truth.

If you have an amusing picture or story to share with our readers, send it to Jonathan Eason at 1022 Senate Street, Columbia, SC 29201 or email it to [jeason@ogs.state.sc.us](mailto:jeason@ogs.state.sc.us).





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## Innovation Award

The South Carolina Department of Archives and History has selected State Fleet Management to receive the South Carolina 2001 Innovation Award. This award was bestowed because of SFM's efforts to upgrade an antiquated and unwieldy paper filing system to an electronic system in which files could be stored as digital images in virtual file cabinets.

Credit for this award goes mainly to the SFM Maintenance Team. Keith Watts started the program and turned it over to Kristi Shull, who now manages it. However, the award is presented to State Fleet Management as a whole.

Beginning in early 1998, the SFM Maintenance Team recognized the need for a better filing solution for Commercial Vendor Repair Program (CVRP) invoices. These invoices, along with the Call Orders (CVRP's term for a purchase order), amounted to nearly 80,000 pieces of paper per year. They were filed in some 4,000 vehicle file folders housed

in ten file cabinets, and with the expansion of the program the need for additional filing space was a continuing problem.

In August 1998 the CVRP was servicing about 4,000 vehicles. As of April 2001, that number had grown to around 9,000, although not all these agencies' vehicles are supported full-time by the program. The number of agencies the CVRP supports has grown by 37% to 28. Any vehicle from these 28 agencies that breaks down should be repaired and billed through the program.

The SFM Maintenance Team decided that filing these invoices and call orders electronically would be a better solution, eliminating the need for the paper files. The invoices would instead be stored in electronic file cabinets as digital images. The team had several criteria for the imaging software: it had to be user-friendly; it had to allow multiple users through a network interface; and it had to have a Web-based module to allow client agencies to review and print

their invoices at their own locations. Maintenance tested three imaging programs and settled on one called *Image Edition* in December 1998.

The use of the scanning software eventually eliminated the need for those ten file cabinets. Filing can now be done by click-and-drag rather than by heavy lifting. Furthermore, while SFM billing personnel used to spend many hours each month pulling and re-filing invoices and call orders, agency users can now look up the information over the Internet through a feature of *Image Edition* called *Image Web*.

*Image Web* allows users to see relevant information for their agency stored in file cabinets — one folder for each vehicle. Maintenance also scans manufacturer service bulletins and recall notices for vehicles.

Congratulations to Keith Watts, Kristi Shull, and to all SFM personnel who made this award possible.